research establishments is the major reason for fewer students opting for science courses at the college level this year;

(b) it so, the details of any corrective action Government plans to take in this regard; and

(c) the details of steps taken by Government to improve the work environment at our scientific research establishments?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) No Sir. The student's choice to take admission in various science courses is driven by other avenues available in the country. This is a cyclical phenomenon and is in response to the available employment opportunities in various other sectors. The Government have taken various corrective measures like enhanced research infrastructure in the universities for better training of students, adoption of new syllabi to match the global changes, special schemes for attracting students to science streams, etc. The salary of a scientist employed in a Government funded Institute cannot be comparable to that in private funded organizations in the country.

Science is driven by individual passion and commitment and not necessarily by monetary benefits. However, a reasonable minimum level of good research facilities and better working conditions and associated perquisites will greatly improve the present situation. The Government has doubled the funding for science and technology in the 10th Plan and the same will be further enhanced in 11th Plan.

Project for Development of Scientific Temper in Rural Areas

2071. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any specific project aimed at developing scientific temper to fight against superstitions especially in the rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether as a part of such projects, Government are proposing to involve NGOs in this task; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir; the National Council for S&T Communication under this Ministry has the mandate for developing scientific temper among the people. Programmes and initiatives include training of communicators, developing communication modules, field programmes and research studies. Science-based NGOs are actively involved in different aspects of the programme including dissemination of explanation of natural phenomena like eclipses to reduce ignorance and fight superstitions. Print and electronic media are utilized in addition to interaction with the community through traditional folk forms.

Importance to pure science

2072. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted the concerns and fears that pure science is not being given adequate importance in India today;

(b) whether Government propose to remedy this decline;

(c) whether the establishment of Indian Institute of Science and Research all over the country will help;

(d) to what extent Government will give emphasis to creating a pool of researchers in science; and

(e) the steps proposed to create Science Centre of Excellence?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Government is aware of the concern that pure sciences are no longer attractive disciplines of study and attractive career options in Indian Society today despite considerable efforts by the Government. This is mainly because of other, more lucrative, career options available to the youth of today in other sectors of economy.

(b) to (c) The Government has been taking steps to arrest this decline all along. Right from the attractive Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana scholarships at the School and College level to the Shyama Prasad